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Andhra Pradesh

Total Number of Voters

4,08,07,256

Men: 2,00,74,322

Women: 2,07,29,452

Transgenders: 3,482

Number of MLA Seats: 175

Candidates Contesting: 2387

Number of MP Seats: 25

Candidates Contesting: 454

Date of Poll:

13.05.2024

Counting:

04.06.2024



You have seen the good (work) done by the YSRCP government in Andhra Pradesh for the last five years, and if you think you have benefitted, then vote for this government, which would lead to your brighter future.



Chandrababu Naidu: "Considering their vote as a sacred duty, they have come to the polling stations. I have witnessed several elections, but these elections seem particularly significant. The vote is a powerful weapon in democracy. It shapes the lives of people and the future of their children."



Voting is a right given to us by the Constitution of India. The Constitution gives us the right to elect our rulers. For voting, both rich and poor are equal, which is our responsibility. For the development of the Kadapa district and the development of the State, everyone should exercise their right to vote and ensure that democracy wins.



ANDHRA PRADESH

Polling above 80%

Huge turnout of women, sr citizens, first-timers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh has registered a massive voter turnout in the General Elections held on Monday. Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Meena, addressing a press conference in the evening said 68% voting was recorded as of 5 p.m. but given the fact that the polling was held until 10 p.m. at more than 3,000 booths, the total percentage could well cross 80%.

Mukesh Kumar Meena has affirmed the peaceful conduct of the State's general elections in 2024, dismissing the necessity for re-polling at any polling centres across the state.

Meena noted that there were no complaints received regarding the voter list.

Acknowledging isolated incidents of violence, primarily in regions such as Palnadu, Tenali, and Macherla constituencies, Meena assured prompt action had been taken. Some technical glitches were reported concerning Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in a few booths, prompting proactive measures with 20,000 additional machines deployed to address such issues.

Preemptive intelligence indicated the likelihood of sporadic violence, prompting heightened security arrangements across identified hotspots. Instances of EVM damage, such as in Macherla, were

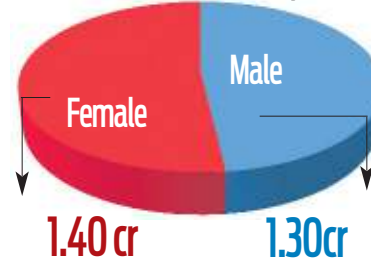


Acknowledging isolated incidents of violence in regions such as Palnadu, Tenali, and Macherla constituencies, Meena assured prompt action had been taken. Technical glitches were reported concerning EVMs in a few booths, prompting proactive measures with 20,000 additional machines deployed.

swiftly addressed with data retrieval efforts and the replacement of affected machines at select centres, obviating the need for re-polling.

Despite delays in approximately 3,000 polling centres, attributed to various reasons, Meena emphasised a significant increase in polling percentages during the

Votes Polled as of 5 pm



current election cycle. Notably, the final polling details are pending completion of the entire polling process.

Monday morning witnessed the commencement of polling across Andhra Pradesh, marked by a generally peaceful atmosphere, punctuated by sporadic incidents of violence in localized areas. Encouragingly, a notable turnout of senior citizens, women, and first-time voters underscored active civic participation.

With a total voter count of 4,14,01,887, inclusive of 2,03,39,851 men, 2,10,58,615 women, and 3,421 transgenders, the electorate will determine the fate of 454 candidates vying for 25 parliamentary seats and 2,387 candidates contesting 175 assembly seats.

Continued on Page 2

Tsunami of pro-govt voting in State: Sajjala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP State general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has said that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's relentless efforts in uplifting marginalised and impoverished communities have resonated deeply across the State. This positivity surrounding the government's actions has culminated in an overwhelming show of support through the ballots. Addressing the media on Monday, Sajjala remarked that voters had decisively made their choice well in advance, evident from the enthusiastic turnout at polling

stations from the crack of dawn.

However, amidst this democratic exercise, Sajjala raised concerns over reported incidents of violence initiated by TDP leaders in the Chittoor district. Allegedly, TDP activists engaged in attacks against YSRCP members and supporters, including instances of violence in Addanki, Peeleru, and Sattenapally shortly after polling commenced. Despite provocations,



Sajjala criticised the TDP for what he described as baseless fearmongering tactics, particularly regarding the Land Titling Act, which he clarified is not currently in effect. Sajjala reiterated that such misinformation campaigns have been reported to the Election Commission, underscoring the party's commitment to upholding democratic principle

Sajjala commended YSRCP representatives for displaying restraint in the face of adver-

sity, contrasting sharply with the reported actions of TDP-affiliated individuals.

Highlighting the importance of socio-economic development, Sajjala said that the progress of underprivileged segments directly translates to the advancement of the entire State.

He also criticised the TDP for what he deemed as baseless fearmongering tactics, particularly regarding the Land Titling Act, which he clarified is not currently in effect. Sajjala reiterated that such misinformation campaigns have been reported to the Election Commission, underscoring the party's commitment to upholding democratic principles.



MLA, voter slap each other, EC takes action

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has taken swift action following an incident where YSRCP Tenali MLA Annabattuni Shivakumar allegedly assaulted a voter within a polling station. In response, the ECI has directed

officials to place the MLA under house arrest and initiate legal proceedings against him.

The altercation occurred when MLA Annabattuni Shivakumar arrived at a polling station to cast his vote and was urged by a voter to join the queue like everyone else. Continued on Page 2

Jagan, Naidu, PK cast votes along with family members

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prominent political figures and their families took part in the electoral process across various constituencies of the State on Monday, as voting commenced at 7 am. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, accompanied by his wife YS Bharati and their children, exercised their franchise in Pulivendula. Similarly, opposition leader Chandrababu Naidu, along with his wife Bhuvaneshwari, son Nara Lokesh, and daughter-in-law Brahmini, cast their votes in Undavalli. JSP chief Pawan Kalyan participated in the voting process at Mangalagiri, while YSRCP general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy did the same at Mangalagiri. Notable ministers, political figures, and public personalities also fulfilled their civic duty by voting at various polling stations throughout the state.

It's worth noting that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's daughters, YS Harsha Reddy and YS Varsha Reddy, drew attention as they cast their votes for the first time alongside their parents in Pulivendula.



Opposition leader Chandrababu Naidu, along with his wife Bhuvaneshwari, son Nara Lokesh, and daughter-in-law Brahmini, cast their votes in Undavalli. JSP chief Pawan Kalyan participated in the voting process at Mangalagiri, while YSRCP general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy did the same at Mangalagiri. Notable ministers, political figures, and public personalities also fulfilled their civic duty by voting at various polling stations throughout the state.

their votes after CM Jagan and his wife Bharati.

In a separate incident, Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan arrived at a polling booth in the Mangalagiri constituency accompanied by his wife, Konidala Anna (formerly known as Anna Lezhneva). However, this action raised concerns as it violated election regulations, as did the presence of a large entourage accompanying Kalyan. The influx of supporters turned the voting event into a photo opportunity, causing inconvenience to other voters awaiting their turn. Some individuals raised objections regarding Kalyan's wife's entry into the booth, as she was not a registered voter at that particular location.



MLA hopefuls in Vizag seek divine intervention for success

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In the bustling streets of Visakhapatnam, where the fervour of democracy resonates with every stride, the day of elections is not just a political event but a spiritual journey for many MLA hopefuls. As dawn breaks on the horizon of the electoral battle, aspiring candidates gather before the temples, seeking the blessings of the divine for a favourable outcome in the polls.

At the temple premises, several candidates expressed their optimism and gratitude for the opportunity to seek blessings. "Amidst hectic campaigning, it is important to pause and acknowledge the spiritual dimension of our journey," remarked one candidate, his voice tinged with reverence. "Ultimately, our fate lies in the hands of the voters, but seeking divine blessings reinforces our commitment to serving the people with sincerity and integrity."

First-time voters swarm polling stations

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

First-time voters in Visakhapatnam turned out in droves, flocking to polling booths before 7 AM, eager to exercise their democratic rights. While for many, it marked a moment of personal pride, for others, particularly the youth, it represented a decisive tilt towards specific political parties, significantly influencing the electoral landscape.

were all casting their votes for the first time. After standing in an area which was partially shaded for around 30 minutes, the group of four cast their vote. Lilly said, "I was 17 at the time of the last Lok Sabha and assembly elections in 2019. I had felt bad at not being able to vote then. Getting your finger inked, becoming a part of the democracy and contributing to the decision of who will be the country's PM is a great feeling." Meanwhile, the prohibition on carrying mobile phones inside some polling stations hampered the mood of many young voters.



prioritizing the needs of senior citizens by facilitating their early voting. Despite minor hiccups, such as technical glitches with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in areas

like Akkayapalem, Thatchetlapalem, and MVP colony, Madhurawada and Gajuwaka polling operations generally proceeded smoothly. Stringent security measures were implemented to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process.

Women emerged as frontrunners in voter turnout, demonstrating a commendable balance between household responsibilities and civic engagement. Saraswati, speaking boldly, expressed her unwavering support for her party, citing the tangible benefits and assistance she has received. Chandana, a housewife in her forties, emphasized the significance of each vote in effecting positive change within her assembly constituency.

Polling above...

Continued from Page 1

Robust security measures were implemented across identified sensitive polling centres, ensuring vigilant monitoring for a peaceful electoral process.

Despite minor incidents of violence, including an unfortunate incident in Punganur and disruptions in various districts, the prompt response of election officials and security personnel ensured the swift resolution of issues, with no loss of life reported.

No elections in future if Modi wins this time: Kharage

PNS ■ HAZSRIBAG/LATEHER

Alleging that the Constitution and democracy were under threat, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharage on Monday claimed that no elections will be held in the future if Prime Minister Narendra Modi wins the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

"The Constitution and democracy are in danger, and people are in danger. If you don't have fundamental rights, you will be slaves. No elections will be held in the future if Modi wins this time," he claimed.

YSRCP files plaint with EC against ABV and Retd DG Thakur

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In an important development, YSRCP leaders have formally filed a complaint with the Election Commission, accusing additional DG AB Venkateswara Rao and retired IPS officer RP Thakur of exerting undue pressure on police officials across districts in Andhra Pradesh to sway the electoral process in favour of Telugu Desam Party (TDP). M Manohar Reddy, the state president of YSRCP's legal cell, asserted that Venkateswara Rao and Thakur, purportedly stationed at the TDP headquarters, have been making phone calls to district police officials, coercing them to act in favour of TDP under the threat of severe repercussions should they fail to comply.



Electoral Officer of Andhra Pradesh, highlighting the alleged misconduct of the aforementioned individuals. He further elaborated that AB Venkateswara Rao, currently under suspension, and RP Thakur, a retired IPS officer, have allegedly exhibited biased behaviour against YSRCP for the past five years. Reddy accused them of orchestrating their operations from the TDP headquarters in Mangalagiri, issuing verbal directives to incumbent police officials ranging from DGs and IGs to District Police



Superintendents, Deputy Superintendents, and Circle Inspectors, instructing them to extend undue favours to TDP, including refraining from making arrests, adopting a lenient approach towards TDP activists, and turning a blind eye to potential instances of rigging and booth capturing during the ongoing polling process.

Manohar Reddy emphasised that as current or former law enforcement officers, Venkateswara Rao and Thakur are duty-bound to discharge their responsibilities impartially and diligently. However, he lamented that the duo stands accused of colluding with Telugu Desam and abusing their influence over police personnel. Reddy condemned these alleged actions as undemocratic, constituting a blatant violation of the model code of conduct and an abuse of police power, which, he stressed, constitutes an offence under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Woman carried in 'doli' to vote in AP elections

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



In a testament to the challenges faced by residents of remote tribal hamlets in Alluri Seetha Rama Raju district, a woman defied all odds by being carried on a doli to cast her vote in the elections. The absence of proper road connectivity in the region has long been a hurdle for the community, yet their determination to participate in the democratic process remains unwavering. The tribal hamlet, nestled amidst the picturesque landscape of Alluri Seetha Rama Raju district, is a vivid illustration of wider infrastructural discrepancies prevalent in rural India.

Against this backdrop of infrastructural neglect, the woman, whose name remains undisclosed, emerged as a beacon of resilience and determination. Aware of the significance of her vote in shaping the future of her community and the nation at large, she resolved to overcome the obstacles hindering her path to the polling booth.

Madhavi Latha booked for checking voter IDs of Muslims

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Malakpet Police on Monday booked the BJP's Lok Sabha candidate, Kompella Madhavi Latha, for harassing women voters.

In a viral video, the BJP candidate was seen checking the voter IDs of Muslim women and asking them to unveil to check their identities.

Malakpet Police Station against BJP candidate Madhavi Latha under Sections 171C, 186, and 505 (1) (c) of IPC and Section 132 of the Representation of the People Act.

Voting Machines (EVM) and manipulating votes. Goshamahal ACP K. Venkat Reddy said, "Initially, the two BJP workers were booked for manipulating voters by using the EVMs and were taken into custody. Then Madhavi Latha arrived at the police station along with her supporters."

MLA, voter slap ...

Continued from Page 1

Enraged by this request, the MLA reportedly slapped the voter. In retaliation, the voter slapped back, leading to a physical altercation between the MLA's supporters and the voter.

such incidents on public perception. A senior party figure remarked that MLA Shivakumar should have exercised restraint and acted responsibly.

TODAY ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Saptami: May 14 02:50 AM to May 15 04:19 AM
Ashtami: May 15 04:19 AM to May 16 06:23 AM
Nakshatram: Pushya: May 13 11:23 AM to May 14 01:05 PM
Ashlesha: May 14 01:05 PM to May 15 03:25 PM
Rahukalam: 3:24 PM to 5:00 PM
Yamagandam: 9:00 AM to 10:36 AM
Varjyam: 03:08 AM to 04:53 AM
Gulika: 12:12 PM to 1:48 PM
Amritakalam: 06:14 AM to 07:57 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:46 AM to 12:38 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Scattered Thunderstorms
Temp: 38°
Humidity: 57%
Sunrise: 5:48 AM
Sunset: 6:36 PM
Updated: May 13, 2024 5:00 PM

'My family works for Rae Bareilly, Modi for Adani, Ambani'

PNS ■ RAE BAREILLY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said Monday his family has always worked for the people of the Rae Bareilly parliamentary constituency, unlike Prime Minister Narendra Modi who works in the "interest of Adani and Ambani".



Rahul Gandhi said his grandmother Indira Gandhi, his father Rajiv Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi have worked to improve the lives of people in Rae Bareilly.

and unemployed youngsters and instead giving prominence to wedding functions in top industrialists' families. He said if the INDIA bloc comes to power, a list of poor families would be compiled and Rs 1 lakh annually -- or Rs 8,500 per month -- transferred in the bank account of one woman in each such family.

Questions have been raised regarding the presence of a large entourage accompanying the MLA inside the polling station, with TDP leaders criticizing the lack of restraint displayed by the MLA. A YSRCP insider, speaking on condition of anonymity, acknowledged the impropriety of the MLA's actions.

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INDIA CORNER

Odisha CEO directs police to arrest polling staff for 'dereliction of duty'

Odisha's Chief Electoral Officer Nikunjia Bihari Dhal on Monday suspended three polling officials and directed the police to arrest two of them for "serious dereliction of duty".



Another NEET aspirant goes missing from Kota's coaching hub

Nearly a week after a NEET aspirant left his PG room here with Rs 8,000 in his pocket, another 19-year-old preparing for the medical entrance exam in Kota has gone missing.



Recklessly driven Delhi Police vehicle mows down man, cop held

A 58-year-old man was mowed down allegedly by a recklessly driven Delhi Police vehicle in Sarojini Nagar area here on Monday, police said.



FM: Is Cong aware of cost of Rahul's 'Khata Khat' schemes?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday wondered whether the Congress is aware of the cost of implementing the social welfare schemes, including giving Rs 1 lakh to women belonging to below poverty line families.



Here's a challenge to him to answer these questions for the people of India," she said. The truth is that the BJP government's fiscal management is much better than that of the UPA, despite facing Covid-19 pandemic in which substantial resources were used for relief efforts, the FM said.

Don't play with self-respect of Bengal's women, Mamata to Modi

PNS ■ BONGAON (WB)

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to play with the self-respect and dignity of women of the state by making "false claims" about atrocities.

'India looking for additional sites for Russian N-reactors'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India is looking for additional sites for Russian nuclear reactors, while the discussion with the French on the proposed Jaitapur nuclear power plant project is underway, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday.



Plea in SC seeks review of EVM VVPAT verdict

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking review of its April 26 judgement by which it had rejected the demand for reverting to the old paper ballot system and the complete cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs with a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT).



sibility of counting of all VVPAT paper slips in terms of time to be taken and additional manpower and referred to the relevant portion of the judgement. "During the course of hearing, it was suggested that instead of physically counting the VVPAT slips, they can be counted by a counting machine. This suggestion, including the suggestion that bar-coding of the symbols loaded in the VVPATs may be helpful in machine counting, may be examined by the ECI," the top court had said in the judgement.

'Modi govt 'anti-MSME', small businesses shut down'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused the Narendra Modi-led central government of being "anti-MSME" and alleged that thousands of small businesses have shut down in the past 10 years.

only for his few chosen friends," he said in a series of posts on X. "As a result, MSMEs have contributed to the lowest fraction of GDP in decades, face the highest tax rates in decades, and are dealing with severe job losses and price rise.



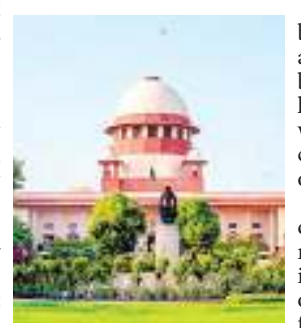
Elaborating further, the Congress leader claimed that eight years after demonetisation, "it has become clear that demonetisation did nothing to curb black money or counterfeit currency in India".

blunder shows the BJP's misplaced priorities and lack of concern for small businesses," he alleged. The implementation of GST was another instance where the BJP failed to consider how policy changes would impact MSMEs, Ramesh said.

Balance to be struck to ensure vehicles comply with PUC: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said prima facie a right balance will have to be struck for ensuring that vehicles remain compliant with pollution under control (PUC) norms and, at the same time, have third party insurance.



meet with an accident, the victim do not get the compensation". He said PUC norms must be complied with and strictest possible norms should be put in, for example if the vehicle does not have PUC, don't give petrol.

'Ab jaldi karni padegi,' Rahul Gandhi replies to question on marriage

PNS ■ RAE BARELI (UP)

Addressing a rally in Rae Bareilly parliamentary constituency for the first time after his nomination, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday faced a familiar query. When is he getting married? Soon, he assured.



Putting his hand on her shoulders and fondly touching her face, Gandhi expressed his appreciation for her efforts in the Rae Bareilly campaign.

Chhattisgarh: 14 Naxalites arrested in Bijapur district

PNS ■ BIJAPUR

Fourteen Naxalites, including 11 carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 41 lakh on their heads, were arrested in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, a police official said on Monday.

They were held on Sunday from forests of Mutvendi and Pidva villages under Ganganalor police station limits by a joint team of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and district police, a statement from Bijapur police said. "Eleven of the 14 Naxalites

were carrying cumulative reward of Rs 41 lakh. These include Renu Kovasi, a member of military company number 2, and Mangli Avlam of Ganganalor area committee with reward of Rs 8 lakh each," the release said.

India-France military exercise Shakti begins

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The seventh edition of the 'Exercise Shakti' between India and France began in Meghalaya on Monday with an aim to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake multi-domain operations in a sub-conventional scenario, the defence ministry said.

Exercise Shakti, being held from May 13-26, will enable the two sides to share their best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures of conducting joint operations, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.



extraction, special heliborne operations, cordon and search operations besides employment of drones and counter-drone systems among others, it said.

conducted in France in November 2021. The seventh edition of the exercise commenced on Monday at Umroi, in a fully developed and modern foreign training node in Meghalaya.



FIRST COLUMN THE RISE OF ROBOTS

Robots are emerging as the next frontier, but can they replace humans?



SHAINY SHARMA

Various research and studies have shown that the next frontier in Artificial intelligence is the Robots. Much more added to it are the big names- Jeff Bezos, Microsoft and many others who are investing in human robots according to people with knowledge of the situation, as part of a scramble to find new applications for the so-called AI Technology. Undoubtedly, robots have increasingly become an integral part of our lives in this century, impacting various aspects of society, industry and everyday activities. The robots have revolutionized in many key sectors be it industrial, healthcare, agricultural, transportation or any other. The science of robots is revolutionizing day by day and scientists are making innovations in robots. Research studies show that by 2050, robots will overcome human beings as they will develop strong intellects.

Many developing nations are involving the use of robots. In the industrial sector robots are performing the tasks such as assembling, welding, painting and packaging in factories thereby increasing efficiency, precision and productivity. In the healthcare sector, robots can perform tasks such as surgery, patient care, rehabilitation and medication dispensing with great precision and even provide support and assistance to elderly or disabled individuals. Talking about the automobile industry, autonomous vehicles- including cars, drones and delivery robots, are transforming transportation and logistics while self-driven car makers are promising to make transportation safer, more efficient and accessible to people who are unable to drive. In the agricultural sector, agricultural robots such as drones



and automated harvesters can help optimise farming practices by monitoring crops, applying fertilizers and pesticides precisely and thereby harvesting crops efficiently which ultimately improves yields, reduces labour costs and minimizes environmental impact. Not only these but the robots are doing jobs and servings in restaurants too. The robots have taken down the responsibility of the pizza boy in pizza shops and even are performing tasks such as customer service, cleaning, and inventory management. They enhance operational efficiency and provide novel experiences for customers.

Robots are indeed reshaping various aspects of everyone's lives, from how individuals work to how they interact with technology and each other. Today, educational robots are gaining an advantage in classrooms over teachers, engineering, and other STEM concepts in a hands-on manner.

Overall, robots are transforming the way we live, work and interact with the world around us. With advancements in robotics technology continuing to expand their capabilities and applications, the question of whether robots will replace humans in various tasks and roles is a complex one. While robots and automation have the potential to replace humans in some repetitive and routine tasks, they also create new opportunities and roles for humans in other areas. However, many tasks and roles require human creativity, empathy, and problem-solving skills, which are difficult for robots to replicate.

There is no denying the fact that the evolution of robots will profoundly impact society, offering new opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and improving quality of life. However, it will also raise the important ethical, social and economic considerations that must be carefully addressed with time. As robotics technology continues to advance, it will further transform society and open new possibilities for innovation and human-machine collaboration.

(The writer is an educator, views are personal)

The plight of unwed mothers of Kolam tribe



TV KATTIMANI

The stigmatisation of 'Kumari Matas' in the Kolam tribe highlights their struggle for social acceptance and economic empowerment



Kolam, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) of the Dravidian race is known for its unique culture, language, indigenous knowledge and matrilineal society. They reside predominantly in the Yavatmal, Chandrapur, some parts of Amravati, Wardha and Nanded districts of Maharashtra and in some parts of Adilabad of Telangana. They have historical roots in Andhra Pradesh and later migrated to the regions of Vidarbha and Marathwada. This Proto- Australoid tribe is often highlighted for its unwed mothers. As per the reports of The Indian Express, there are at least 45 registered unwed mothers and over 450 unregistered unwed mothers only in the three blocks named Maregaon, Pandarkawada and JhariJamini of Yavatmal. Being a matriarchal society, the Kolams of Yavatmal have always celebrated womanhood. They celebrate the first menstruation of girls; they worship 'Gabhuri', the mother Goddess as their main deity to uphold their matriarchal societal roots.

However, the situation is changing. Though the unwed mothers have been renamed as the 'KumariMaata' due to their assimilation with mainstream society yet due to their rising inclination towards the male-dominated society, patriarchal tenets are growing in these traditions. Therefore, the position of women is also declining consequently and those unwed mothers who used to live a normal life previously are now considered 'Bad character women'. There are various case studies and stories of women of the Kolam tribe where the elite in the society or financially stronger like contractors, outsiders visit the areas for work purposes, establish physical interactions with the women in their communities and refuse to marry them when they are expecting a child. Women are frequently conned by marriage promises because they are socially, emotionally and economically vulnerable. The woman is held liable for the premarital pregnancy, whereas the responsible males are excluded



THE KOLAM TRIBE, CLASSIFIED AS A PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUP (PVTG), IS GRAPPLING WITH A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE OF UNWED MOTHERS, EMPHASISING THE URGENCY FOR INTERVENTIONS TO TACKLE THEIR COMPLEX SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL STRUGGLES

ed from this process.

Most of these Kolam women work as agricultural labourers, construction labourers and other low-wage activities due to which it becomes very easy for the traders and other outsiders to abuse them physically. For example, according to Deshpande (2016) "border districts of Maharashtra, such as Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Bhandara, Buldhana, Amravati, Nagpur and Gondia too have unwed mothers, the numbers in Yavatmal are higher because of its proximity to the chilli fields of Telangana, where work (for the poor) is available throughout the year. A number of unwed mothers say they were lured by neighbouring state's men who promise marriage but left when they became pregnant."

Some of them get pregnant while being a minor whereas others are due to their backwardness. Though in most tribal societies, giving birth to a child is a biological phenomenon and hence considered pious but yet due to the assimilation with the conventional societies they are also recognizing childbirth as a structural process where the consent of society, kin and kith is necessary. These structural changes are pushing unwed mothers toward various other socio-cultural and economic problems.

The most important among these is that unwed mothers are not accepted within the community nor do they find any other groom, as they are considered obscene. As a result, for the entire period of life, they serve as a single mother due to which the pressure of childbearing increases among them. The problems are more serious as being unwed mothers they often face disgrace in the newly constructed norms of patriarchal society. Sometimes they need to

leave the village and stay in the outskirts whereas in many cases the other women are not allowed to talk to them or join them for any occasion, as they are believed to be malignant due to their premarital physical relations. The consequences are economic and occupational also. As a daily wage labourer, their leisure time is very little but being single mothers they need breaks for breastfeeding and childcare due to which they face pay cuts. Sometimes they need to pay a fine to the panchayats also for their "misconduct".

These unknown pregnancies among the women of Kolam are a crucial issue.

These indicate the lack of awareness about contraceptive measures, education, economic weakness and social vulnerability that often attract these women to fake marriage conversations and other luring proposals. As per the report of Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University (2018-2019) in Yavatmal, "28.84 per cent Kumari Matas are in the age range of 26 to 30 years. 36 per cent Kumari Matas having education up to Fourth standard, 67.30 per cent Kumari Matas are belonging to 'Kolam' caste, 82.69 per cent are homeless. 51.09 per cent are pregnant due to outsiders, 82.07 per cent children of Kumari Matas are admitted in the school by furnishing the name of mother only, 92.30 per cent had delivery at home, 61.63 per cent getting help from Government schemes".

The subject is more critical as many of them are uncounseled because most of them do not come forward to speak due to socio-cultural stigma and thus their stories remain untold. This has again a negative impact on them as their complete family details are not mentioned in the Government records like ration cards, Aadhar

cards, etc. which deprives them of getting the benefits of many Government schemes that can make their life easier.

As per the report of Pune Times Mirror, "a survey of such victims is conducted every year by a woman and child development (WCD) officer with the help of Anganwadi workers and a junior protection officer at the taluka level." Further, the Anganwadi workers help these unwed mothers by teaching them the methods of nutrition and hygiene. The Bombay High Court has already directed the state to the need for the rehabilitation of young unwed mothers among the Kolam tribe. The Government of Kerala is also running a similar kind of scheme called "Snehasparsham" which offers unwed mothers ₹1000/- per month to lessen the financial burden of these economically vulnerable unwed mothers. The need of the hour is to initiate some projects and schemes for them so the Kumari Matas of Yavatmal can be included in the parameters of Government benefits at a large scale.

The infrastructural facilities like schools and primary health care centres, are the basic needs of these regions. Endeavours should also be taken to open basic schools and training centres for vocational courses like sewing, beautician, etc. The awareness about Self-Self-help groups can make them financially independent through various micro-level businesses like horticulture, bee-keeping, jelly-making etc. Further, documentation of unwed mothers can give them a social identity and make them live a life of dignity and self-respect.

(The writer is Vice Chancellor, Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh; views are personal)

Kejriwal's bail: Unveiling political prophecies post-release

The Delhi CM's release sparks controversy with ominous predictions and bold political statements, fuelling nationwide debate on democracy's future

Persons accused of criminal cases getting arrested and the courts granting them bail is nothing new. Even if the person happens to be the reigning chief minister of a State or a former union minister of finance, the bail does not absolve the accused of the charges. The Supreme Court order that released the Delhi Chief Minister on bail from the custody of the Enforcement Directorate says it is a provisional arrangement so that he could participate in the election campaign as the Lok Sabha poll comes once in five years.

So far, so good. But what came after the Delhi Chief Minister was released on bail needs to be analyzed threadbare. On Saturday, he was shipped at Lord Anjaneya



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Temple and addressed a press meeting. What he said during the press meeting is shocking and capable of causing fear in the minds of the people. He said if the BJP wins the 2024 Lok Sabha election and comes back to power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will send all Opposition leaders to jail. Kejriwal also claimed that Amit Shah is being groomed as the next Prime Minister as Modi is likely to retire in 2025

when he turns 75. Yet another disclosure made by the Delhi Chief Minister was that Yogi Adityanath would be removed as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh within two months of the BJP coming back to power.

The national and international media are celebrating Kejriwal's bail and his prophecies. A major section of the media forgot the fact that they were the ones to give running commentaries of Live events without joining the game as players. The media in Kerala and Tamil Nadu are on Cloud Nine reporting that there is going to be a change of Government at the Centre after 4 June 2024. Well, let's leave it to the voters who are in the process of electing their representatives. It is good to see

that doubts about tampering the electronic voting machines have taken a stage and the Opposition leaders have started working on the modalities of Government formation.

Saturday's press meeting by the Delhi Chief Minister took one to 2019 when the same had claimed that if the BJP wins the General Election and returns to power, there would not be any more elections in India. "The 2019 General Election would be the last poll the country will see if Narendra Modi returns to power," these were the words of Kejriwal in 2019.

After the 2019 general election, Narendra Modi returned to power with a larger majority and the country saw regular elections to all the State assemblies that completed their

mandatory five-year tenure. Though the claim fell flat on all fours, neither the media that flashed Kejriwal's warning about the "last" general elections nor our political pundits remembered the same.

Once the results were announced and the BJP was returned to power, that became the news, and everything else was forgotten (at least till 2024). Yet another battlefield has been opened by the Opposition and that is the One Nation, One Leader concept, the brand new slogan coined by Kejriwal. Wasn't it George Santayana, the Spanish-American philosopher who said in 1863 that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"? Narendra Modi, I am sure

does know this adage quite well and hence there is no possibility of following the slogan coined by Kejriwal. The entire media in the country is unanimous in their opinion that elections are the festivals of democracy. But the festivals will certainly lose their charm if they are fueled by half-lies and full lies. One is at a loss to understand the logic behind the claim by certain leaders that the BJP government would subvert the Constitution! Who derailed the Constitution much against the order of the Supreme Court that the basic structure of the Constitution should never be tampered with. It was in 1976 that then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi altered the preamble of the Constitution by incorporating

the words secularism, socialism etc. India survived as a nation from 1947 to 1976 without the terms secularism and socialism in its Constitution. B R Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution, was totally against the inclusion of these terms when it was drafted for the first time. It was after the introduction of these terms that communal riots and terrorism peaked in India. Accusations and allegations are fine because they add to the intensity of the campaigning. But baseless allegations rob the beauty of the election process. Interestingly, the leaders named by the Delhi chief minister as potential victims of the Modi regime are not saints or beatified ones. Reports from Delhi say that Kejriwal

was summoned eight or nine times by the ED for questioning in connection with money laundering. The Chief Minister chose to ignore the same with contempt. He might not know the truth that the reigning Prime Minister cooperated with the Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team under the chairmanship of R K Raghavan, a former CBI director to grill him about the Gujarat riots. For 19 hours, the then Gujarat Chief Minister sat through the grilling and answered all the queries they asked. That is what we call honesty and integrity. People still hope that Kejriwal too is honest.

(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Gold falls Rs 100; silver slumps Rs 300 amid weak global cues

Gold prices fell Rs 100 to Rs 73,150 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid a decline in precious metal rates in the international markets, according to HDFC Securities.



Suzuki says will continue to expand SUV portfolio in India

Japanese car maker Suzuki Motor Corporation on Monday said it will continue to expand SUV portfolio in India to recover its overall market share in the passenger vehicle segment.



Piramal Group arm invests Rs 600 cr in microlender Annapurna Fin

Piramal Alternatives on Monday announced a Rs 600 crore investment for an undisclosed stake in microfinance company Annapurna Finance.



CHABAHAR PORT OPERATION

India, Iran sign long term bilateral contract

India and Iran on Monday signed a 10-year contract for the operation of a terminal at the strategically important Chabahar port in Iran, a move that will boost regional connectivity as well as trade ties.



Operation was signed between Indian Ports Global Limited (IPGL) of India and the Port & Maritime Organisation (PMO) of Iran, enabling operation of Shahid-Beheshti in Chabahar Port Development Project for a period of 10 years.

Port will connect India to Central Asia: Jaishankar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said Chabahar Port will definitely see more investments and connectivity linkages coming out of it after India and Iran signed a long-term contract for the operation of its Shahid-Beheshti Port terminal.



more investments, it will see more connectivity linkages coming out of that port," Jaishankar said. "We believe today that connectivity is a big issue in that part. Chabahar will connect us with Central Asia," he added.

GST REGISTRATION

Five states show interest in Aadhaar-based authentication

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five states, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, have shown interest in rolling out Aadhaar-based authentication for GST registration, an official said on Monday.



Telangana, have shown interest in implementing Aadhaar-based authentication for GST registration," an official said.

put the proposal up before the state Cabinets for approval. Goods and Services Tax (GST) authorities have so far been using OTP-based Aadhaar authentication to establish the identity of the applicants, seeking registration.

India extend US\$ 50 million budgetary support to Maldives as goodwill gesture

PNS ■ MALE

In a goodwill gesture, India has decided to extend vital budgetary support to the Maldives with the rollover of a US\$ 50 million Treasury Bill for another year at the Maldivian government's special request, it was announced on Monday.



Government of Maldives. The continuation of subscription has been made at the special request of the Government of Maldives to secure budgetary support from the Government of India, the statement said.

arrangement, SBI has been subscribing to these government treasury bills at zero cost to the Maldives government. This means the Maldives incurs no interest expense on the borrowed amount, the Edition.mv news portal reported.

Ola CEO shuns Microsoft, says India needs its own tech platforms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rebuking Microsoft and its subsidiary LinkedIn, Ola CEO Bhavish Aggarwal in a post said India needs to establish its own tech platforms to shun the chances of being "culturally subsumed" and "governed" by western big tech monopolies.



He had shared a screenshot from a generative AI response that used "they/their" pronouns to describe Aggarwal. Bering the "pronoun illness", he had said he hopes the practise doesn't reach India.

presumed Indians need to have pronouns in our life, and that we can't criticise it. They will bully us into agreeing with them or cancel us out," he wrote later.

Retail inflation eases to 4.83%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation eased to 4.83 per cent in April as prices of some kitchen items declined, according to government data released on Monday.

Stock markets rebound on last-hour buying

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty staged a dramatic rebound on Monday to settle higher following buying in HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Tata Consultancy Services.

rebounded around 310 points from the day's low of 21,821.05 and hit a high of 22,131.65. From the Sensex basket, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Axis Bank, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Larsen & Toubro, ICICI Bank and Power Grid were the major gainers.

Govt plans to make anti-fake review rules mandatory for e-commerce firms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is considering to make it mandatory for e-commerce companies to comply with quality norms for consumer reviews after a voluntary push failed to effectively curb fake reviews, a top official said on Monday.



"It's been more than one year that the voluntary standard on 'online reviews' was notified. Some entities claim that they are complying with it. However, fake reviews are still getting published," Khare said.

Secretary at the Consumer Affairs Ministry. "It's been more than one year that the voluntary standard on 'online reviews' was notified. Some entities claim that they are complying with it. However, fake reviews are still getting published," Khare said.

Coromandel to acquire additional 7% stake in Dhaksha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Coromandel International Ltd on Monday announced the acquisition of an additional 7 per cent stake in Chennai-based drone manufacturing firm Dhaksha Unmanned Systems with an investment of Rs 150 crore.

Technology Ltd, it added. "This investment in Dhaksha aligns with Coromandel's vision of diversifying in technology spaces and promoting technology adoption across various spheres," Coromandel International Ltd Executive Chairman Arun Alagappan said.

51.40 cr person-years employment generated during 2014-24: SKOCH

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A SKOCH report on Monday claimed that 51.40 crore person years of employment was generated between 2014 and 2024 during the Modi government regime.



case studies covering borrowers who took multiple loans and data of various government schemes. "Over a period between 2014-24, a total of 51.40 crore employment has been generat-

ed. Out of which 19.79 crore employment has been generated by governance-led interventions. The rest, 31.61 crore, has been contributed by credit-led interventions," a release said.

have taken multiple loans and the average direct employment per loan amount stands at 6.6 jobs," said author of the report S Sameer Kochhar, Chairman, SKOCH Group.

'Skilled Indian nurses seek overseas opportunities despite domestic demand'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Demand for skilled nurses is projected to grow by 17-18 per cent by 2027 in the country but a large number of trained ones are seeking opportunities abroad, drawn by enhanced remuneration packages and facilitative family visa programmes, digital talent solutions provider NLB Services said in a report.



demand for nursing roles spans across regions including Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The nursing profile currently commands annual earnings ranging between Rs 2,50,000 (entry-level) to Rs 7,00,000

(mid-senior level), and employers seek candidates with diverse skill sets including compassionate and competent care. While the majority of the workforce still has higher female representation, there is a noticeable increase in male nurses as well, it added.

for Indian nursing talent abroad, said the report. The demand for Indian nurses abroad is growing steadily, and is projected to increase by almost 100 per cent in 6-7 years, it added.

Esha & beau Manuel open for IVF, surrogacy & adoption

Actress Esha Gupta is excited to start a family with her lover, Spanish entrepreneur Manuel Campos Guallar. In a recent interview, Esha discussed her wedding, children, and family. The *Raaz 3D* actress said that she does not want to be part of a rat race to sign projects but rather is spiritually happy and relaxed. The 38-year-old admitted that her boyfriend helped her set up a restaurant business in Spain. She said, "He's helped me secure my life. I often joke that now you can't even leave me. You have to marry me." Further talking about her wedding plans, she admitted that marriage is on her cards and may happen soon. Esha also admitted that she is currently focusing more on her health. She continued, "Eventually, whenever down the line, I'll get married, and then down the line, I have kids. I'm focusing on that. The last two years, by God's grace, have been a big change in his life, work-wise. I've always dreamed of having kids." The *Rustom* actress stated that she cannot imagine her life without children and dogs. Esha had always wanted to experience parenthood. In the same interview, she revealed freezing her eggs in 2017, long before meeting her boyfriend Manuel. "I was very smart. I was single for almost 3 and a half years before I met Manuel (in 2019). I met him by chance, not even in his country or my country. Since then, we both knew that we were getting into a relationship and not dating. You're not at that age to date." Esha acknowledged that she made it obvious to Manuel that their goal was to marry and have children. And, as much as she adored kids, Manuel was ready and eager to become a parent. The couple has kept their options open, including IVF surrogacy and maybe adoption. Esha has an interesting slate of films coming up, including *Murder 4*, *Desi Magic*, and *Hera Pheri 3*.

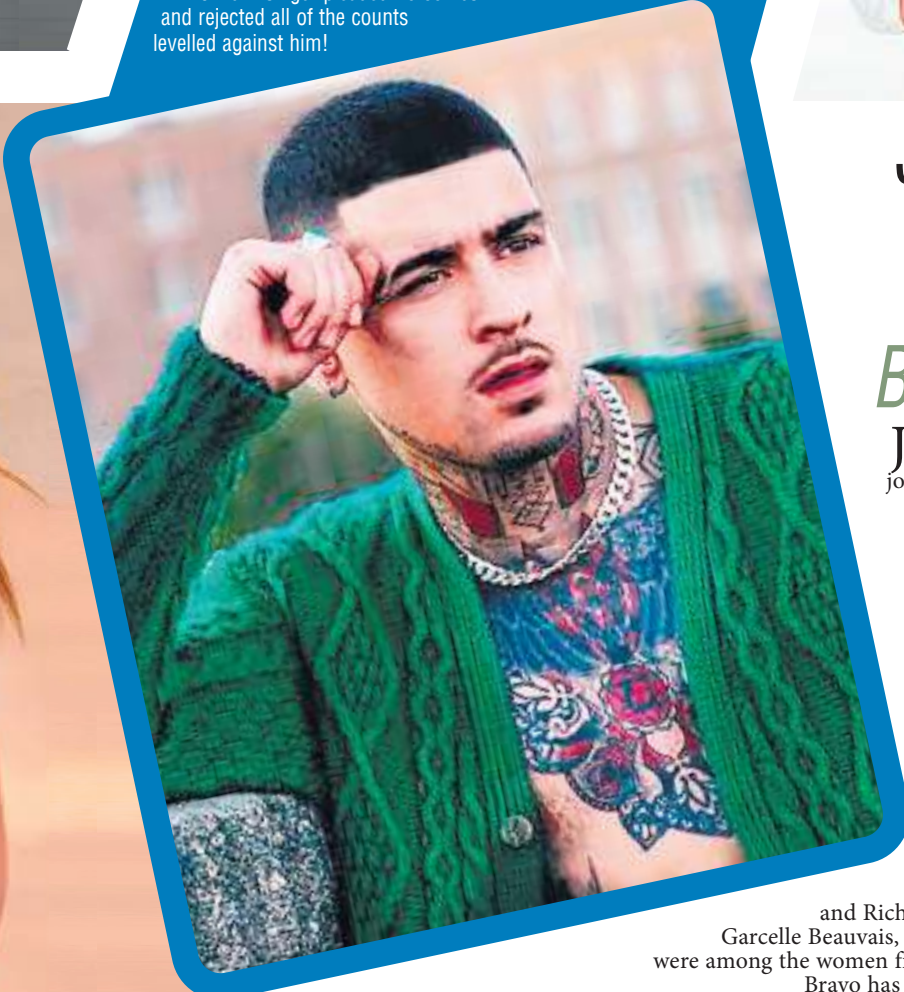
Zayn Malik is 'completely supportive' of Gigi Hadid's present relationship: Source

Zayn Malik and Gigi Hadid are on good terms, as the latter is dating Bradley Cooper. Malik, 31, does, in fact, support the couple's relationship. "He's completely supportive," a source says, emphasising that the couple has come a long way since their 2021 breakup. Two years after their acrimonious breakup, Hadid, 28, started dating Cooper, 49. The couple, who were first linked in October of last year, are both single parents, with Hadid having daughter Khai, three, and Malik and Cooper sharing daughter Lea De Seine with ex-girlfriend Irina Shayk. As their relationship grows stronger, the runway model is apparently "thrilled with how things are going" with the *Maestro* star. However, Hadid is equally concerned with ensuring that her daughter's father, Malik, is on the same page. "They went through a rough patch but have both matured and are focusing on their 3-year-old daughter [Khai]," a second source tells the aforementioned outlet, adding, "It's important to them that she grows in a stable environment." According to the report, Malik was displeased with Hadid's relationship but seemed to have changed his mind. Hadid and Malik met in 2015 and dated on and off for six years before splitting in 2021. Following the announcement of their breakup, the former *One Direction* member was charged with four counts of harassment stemming from an alleged confrontation with Hadid's mother, Yolanda. Back then, the *Pillowtalk* singer pleaded no contest and rejected all of the counts levelled against him!



Olivia had to go through full hysterectomy to avoid cancer recurrence

Olivia Munn, who starred in *X-Men: Days of the Future Past*, said in a recent interview that she had a full hysterectomy in April due to her ongoing battle with breast cancer. Olivia indicated that removing her uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries was the best decision for her because it was vital to avoid cancer recurrence by halting the synthesis of estrogen in her body. She said, "It was a big decision to make, but it was the best decision for me because I needed to be present for my family." The actor continued, "I had friends try to cheer me up by saying, 'Malcolm's not going to remember this. Don't worry! But I just kept thinking to myself, 'I'm going to remember this; I missed all these things.' It's his childhood, but it's my motherhood, and I don't want to miss any of these parts if I don't have to." It's Munn's fifth surgery in her battle with cancer. Previously, she underwent a full double mastectomy, lymph node dissection, reconstructive surgery, and a nipple delay. Munn also revealed that she had been taking Lupron to suppress estrogen before her hysterectomy, but the medication's adverse effects had left her bedridden owing to acute exhaustion. Munn revealed that she froze her eggs for the third time after being diagnosed, expressing her and her partner John Mulaney's wish to grow their family. Munn officially publicised her breast cancer diagnosis in March, after which she had a double mastectomy. Her breast carcinoma risk assessment score was allegedly 37%, and an MRI revealed luminal B carcinoma in both of her breasts.



JAMIE LEE CURTIS JOINS THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF BEVERLY HILLS CAST

Jamie Lee Curtis, the Oscar winner, showed her support for her friend Amanda de Cadenet, who is said to be joining Season 14 of *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. Filming for this season began last weekend, and Kyle Richards—the final member of the original cast—was spotted in front of the *Bravo* cameras at Sutton Stracke's Surrealism Ball. *Halloween* actor Kyle Richards' pal, Jamie Lee Curtis, who has appeared multiple times on the popular *Bravo* series, spilled some info about Amanda de Cadenet, who is purportedly joining the show as Richards' "friend." "Excited my friend [Amanda de Cadenet] is a new FRIEND of [Kyle Richards] and the gang on [RHOBH]," Curtis wrote on Instagram. "Amanda will bring her cool rebel/rock/wife, feminism and advocacy for women to that group. Can't wait to watch." Curtis also hinted that she would visit in the upcoming season to see how her friends Cadenet and Richards are doing. *US Weekly* revealed that Kathy Hilton, Garcelle Beauvais, Erika Jayne, and presumed newbie Bozoma Saint John were among the women filming *RHOBH* at Sutton's house this weekend, though *Bravo* has not yet confirmed the group for the upcoming season.

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

NANCY

SUDOKU

		1	3	7		4		
		4	8					3
8						6		5
			1		3	2		
		5	4		9			
1		9						2
	3				6	1		
		2		4	1	5		

Yesterday's solution

5	7	8	3	4	9	2	6	1
1	2	6	7	8	5	9	3	4
3	4	9	6	1	2	7	8	5
6	8	3	1	2	7	4	5	9
2	9	7	4	5	3	8	1	6
4	1	5	9	6	8	3	7	2
7	5	1	2	3	4	6	9	8
8	3	4	5	9	6	1	2	7
9	6	2	8	7	1	5	4	3

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- A season
- Strike with an open hand
- Jump over
- Having a sharp sour taste
- Applauded
- Bumped
- Sleepy
- A biting, jumping insect
- Require
- Something built over a river
- A permit to drive
- The language of Spain
- Concealed from view
- Shouted
- Gown
- A strong box for storing valuables

DOWN

- Not sick
- Just about
- Overdue
- A talking pet bird

SOLUTION

S	C	R	I	P	T	O	R	S
T	H	I	N	K	R	E	N	S
H	P	E	N	S	A	E	A	S
A	T	O	G					
T	E	A	B	A	G	M	O	H
R	I	S	E	R				
F	I	G	H	T	W	H	E	E
U	O	A	V					
R	E	C	O	G	N	I	S	T

Saiyami could feel her character 'racked with pain' in 8 A.M. Metro

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Recent box-office success *Ghoomar's* renowned fame, Saiyami Kher, returns once again with *8 A.M. Metro*—the adaptation of *Andamaina Jeevitam* into a Hindi film that displays her dedication to pushing boundaries and delivering essential storylines to a larger audience. The film may have been released in 2023, but now is the moment for it to find its rightful place on a national stage, generating greater appreciation. So, in order to learn more about the popularity of this simple yet uplifting story, we had a call with the lead actress, and here's how it went.

Without hesitation, she dives right into her characterisation in the film, saying, "As everyone already knows, my character is dealing with mental health concerns. So, as soon as I noticed the phrase 'mental health' in my readings, I was determined to bring this essential topic back to the forefront. Not that others haven't talked about it; they have, but our plot was slightly slanted toward lyrical lines. I wouldn't call it a complex character, but my character is 'suffering' in the movie. The gravity of the character gradually became apparent to me, and I am not lying when I say that I could feel it."

Okay, let's not call it complex, as Saiyami stated! But may sensitive be the correct word? Taking note of this, we were curious about the preps that went into portraying this "sensitive" role on-screen. She added, "I had never had a panic attack, but I know some of my close friends and family members who had. Unfortunately, I have witnessed it. I got into the persona after meeting a few psychiatrists

Actress Saiyami Kher, currently basking on the love she's been receiving for her film *8 A.M. Metro*, being streamed on Zee 5, gets candid with *The Pioneer* exclusively speaking of her character "suffering" in the film, preps for the same, shooting in real locations, and more.

and therapists! It was critical for me to comprehend what occurs during a panic attack, even in a bodily sense. Even my co-star told me later on in the filming, 'Saiyami, do you know? When exposed to panic attack, some people appear to experience a heart attack.' That startled me!" So such professional data was useful to her, including, "The videos that I watched online to see what kinds of reactions they get. And they differed greatly! So I had to show on screen that I'm sweating and unable to breathe. The psychologist emphasised the significance of these minor details."

The well-known actress from *Mirzya* told us how she brought out the nuances of the unlikely friendship on-screen, stating, "This script also reminded me of one of my most favourite films that I tend to watch on a loop. This movie isn't only about a romantic angle but also about the serendipity of the friendship that's coming alive. And this is a real possibility; it might happen in our lives at any time! In my personal life, I've had several similar experiences. That stranger made me a better person, but one must be open to that type of contact! Another example is filming with your co-stars; they are usually strangers to you if you are matched for the first time on screen, yet they bring out the chemistry in you." This dynamic has been very prevalent in the film industry for her. Fortunately, Gulshan is not one of them (she giggles). "We've worked together before. And I couldn't wait to continue working with him from where we left off! I was unprepared for our last collaboration; therefore, this was my turn to shine alongside Gulshan in this film. And I must say, it worked out really well."

Hammering deeper into the ongoing discussions on the film, she explains, "The best and worst reactions come to us through social media these days, so I've seen times when a few users were

way too brutal to me online. But by God's grace, I've had incredible reactions to my back-to-back releases. I am receiving DMs in which a few people are telling me about their real-life experiences. I believe I restarted the conversation about it! I recognise that my film is on a tiny scale, but if it reaches a huge number of people, I consider it successful." Another appealing aspect of this film is its use of poetry and literature, which piques our interest in the actress' personal relationship to it and how poetry enhances the plot. Oh, she had a personal story to share with us! "I'm a huge fan of poetry, owing to Gulzar Sahab, who wrote my debut movie. Since I met him, he has made me fall in love with poetry. Javed Akhtar Sahab could be another powerful influence in inspiring me to fall in love with poetry. I have looked up to him since I was a child! So I'm used to writing poetry at home for personal gratification, but this film provided me the opportunity to bring it into the spotlight. It's literally the central strand of our film! I could draw inspiration from Farhan Akhtar's portrayal in *ZNMD*, which made both my character and the film more artistic than commercial. What helped the movie even more was the fact that the makers did not use poetry for superfluous ends."

And how could we miss the lead actors filming a few important sequences in the metro, all through the lens of commuting while in it? She revealed interesting facts about it, saying, "It was a low-budget film, so all of the locations were real, including the scenes shot in the metro. It's Anurag Kashyap's way of shooting! This movie contained a lot of exterior scenes, which boosted my excitement. And my biggest takeaway from this film is the renewed public discourse about the importance of consulting psychologists for mental wellness. Because I've been advised by a few industry professionals not to choose roles that appear older or less glamorous—but to me, they're just noise because I do what my heart finds rewarding."



I've been advised by a few industry professionals not to choose roles that appear older or less glamorous—but to me, they're just noise because I do what my heart finds rewarding.

VIRTUAL SESSION



MAGIC OF CINEMA AT CANNES

CELEBRATING THE

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

For the second consecutive year, Walkers & Co. made its triumphant return to the Festival De Cannes, showcasing Indian filmmakers through collaborative efforts. In regards to this, an exclusive virtual round table discussion was organised featuring film critic Anupama Chopra, alongside emerging filmmakers Ambiecka Pandit and Akshay Parvatkar, mentored by Guneet Monga.

To begin with, Ruchira Jaitley, Diageo's CMO shared, "The essence is to foster progress through collective storytelling. In today's rapidly changing society, the celebration of individuals making a positive impact is paramount, and the film serves as a medium for proactive narratives. Cannes is the epitome of this creativity, offering a platform for learning and inspiration. *The Walkers Project* aims to support young filmmakers, expanding the Indian presence at Cannes and guiding emerging talents to experience the magic of the festival."

Ambiecka reflects on the incredible opportunity presented by the project, emphasising the challenging selection process and the chance to articulate the significance of cinema. For her and Akshay, being nominated is not just an honour but also a transformative journey, opening minds to new possibilities in filmmaking. Akshay said, "I am honoured to be part of the fellowship, and it gave me confidence in whatever I have made; short films and conversations

with film critics have already been fruitful."

The selection process for the project spanned four months, and explaining the same, Anupama explained, "It involved three curators who also doubled as film critics and companions. Sonia, from the Mumbai Film Festival, was among them. They deliberated and eventually presented six names for consideration in *The Walkers Project*. Deepti DCunha, the director of the Mumbai Film Festival, was impressed by the incredible short films, which sparked lengthy discussions. Eventually, it was agreed that two individuals stood out as the best fit for one of the projects."

The ethos is centered around expanding perspectives, amplifying voices, and fostering inclusion, progression, and community change. These guiding principles inspire young filmmakers to create impactful stories that resonate deeply with audiences. Ambiecka expresses her anticipation of further developing her voice and honour it through her work.

Akshay shared his excitement upon learning of his selection, feeling an immediate connection with the ethos, which aligns closely with his own beliefs. He spoke of his commitment to inclusion in his films and recognised the platform as a significant opportunity to authentically express his voice while making meaningful contributions to the film industry!

Anupama put a spotlight on the significance of seizing every opportunity, highlighting mentors like Guneet's invaluable support for young filmmakers. Reflecting on her experiences at Cannes,

she shares practical advice, underscoring the importance of comfortable shoes amidst the bustling environment. Anupama urges, "Filmmakers should prioritise comfort over fashion, considering the extensive walking and standing involved." With thousands of attendees immersed in cinema over ten days, she describes Cannes as both hectic and enchanting, emphasising the need for relentless energy, hydration, and seizing every chance to eat.

"These may seem mundane tips, but they're indispensable for navigating the festival's whirlwind atmosphere." She also encouraged filmmakers to be proactive in networking, shedding any shyness to make meaningful connections!

After absorbing Anupama's experiences, Ambiecka too acknowledged the demanding nature of festivals, recognising the mix of networking, standing, and walking involved. She appreciated the insights gained from Anupama, providing valuable expectations for the festival. Ambiecka found the workshops engaging, particularly in understanding the film ecosystem. Through discussions with curators, the young filmmakers learned invaluable tips on navigating the festival terrain, gaining new perspectives, and delving into topics like co-production. A session with Guneet addressed lingering doubts, offering clarity and guidance. Initial conversations about festival essentials such as food and attire proved instrumental, setting a practical tone for their festival journey.

Managing lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men

The term "lower urinary tract symptoms" (LUTS) refers to a group of symptoms that impact the lower urinary tract's ability to manage and produce high-quality micturition. Both men and women can be affected by LUTS, albeit males are more likely to present with them and their frequency increases with age. According to estimates, nearly 50% of males over 50 experience LUTS.

Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men can be classified into two broad categories:

Storage symptoms: These include urgency, frequency, nocturia, and urgency incontinence. They indicate problems with storing urine in the bladder.

Voiding symptoms: These encompass hesitancy, weak stream, straining, and incomplete emptying. They suggest difficulties in evacuating urine from the bladder.

The management of lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men typically involves addressing both storage and voiding symptoms, as well as identifying and treating the underlying cause. Here's a general overview of management strategies:

- Lifestyle modifications:** Encouraging lifestyle changes such as reducing fluid intake before bedtime, avoiding caffeine and alcohol, and maintaining a healthy weight can help improve symptoms.
- Behavioural therapies:** Techniques such as bladder training, pelvic floor exercises (Kegel exercises), and timed voiding can help manage symptoms, particularly in cases of overactive bladder or urge incontinence.
- Medications:**
 - Alpha-blockers:** These relax the muscles in the prostate and bladder neck, improving urine flow and reducing symptoms of bladder outlet obstruction. Examples include tamsulosin, alfuzosin, and terazosin.
 - 5-alpha reductase inhibitors:** These medications

can reduce the size of the prostate gland, particularly in cases of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Examples include finasteride and dutasteride.

- Antimuscarinics:** Used primarily for overactive bladder symptoms to reduce urgency and frequency. Examples include oxybutynin, tolterodine, and solifenacin.

- Beta-3 agonists:** Drugs like mirabegron can relax the bladder muscle, increasing bladder capacity and reducing symptoms of overactive bladder.

- Phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors:** Sometimes used to improve symptoms of BPH and erectile dysfunction, such as tadalafil.

- Antibiotics:** If symptoms are due to a urinary tract infection or prostatitis.

- Minimally invasive therapies:** For men who don't respond well to medications, minimally invasive procedures such as transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP), laser prostate surgery (such as HoLEP) or prostatic urethral lift (UroLift) may be considered.

- Combination therapy:** Sometimes, a combination of medications or therapies may be more effective, especially in cases where symptoms are multifactorial.

- Follow-up and monitoring:** Regular follow-up with the urologist is essential to monitor symptoms, adjust medications if necessary, and address any complications or changes in condition.

Ultimately, the choice of treatment depends on the individual patient's symptoms, underlying cause, overall health, and preferences, and should be decided in consultation with a healthcare provider. Additionally, considering age-related factors and potential comorbidities is important in tailoring the management approach.

(The author, Dr. Vikas Jain, is the HOD and Consultant - Urology, at Manipal Hospital.)



VISHNU MANCHU'S KANNAPPA TO DEBUT AT THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

In a historic stride for Telugu cinema, Vishnu Manchu is all set to unveil *The World Of Kannappa* at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival on May 20, 2024. This momentous occasion marks a significant leap onto the global stage for Telugu cinema.

More than just a film, *The World Of Kannappa* represents a cinematic journey that aims to redefine storytelling and captivate audiences worldwide.

As the Cannes red carpet eagerly anticipates the arrival of this cinematic marvel, excitement reaches a fever pitch. Vishnu Manchu's meticulous craftsmanship, combined with the stellar performances of the ensemble cast, sets the scene for a landmark moment in Telugu cinema. "We are thrilled to showcase the teaser of *Kannappa* at the esteemed Cannes Film Festival," expressed Vishnu Manchu with enthusiasm. "Cannes provides the perfect platform to introduce our production to a global audience. By bringing our rich Indian heritage to the world stage, we hope to enlighten audiences worldwide about the timeless tales and cultural richness encapsulated in our film."

As the world awaits the Cannes debut of *The World Of Kannappa*, it stands poised to make an unforgettable impact on the global cinematic landscape. With its compelling narrative, stellar performances, and a cast of legendary talents, this promises to be an extraordinary cinematic experience like no other.



'Only 20 days of shooting left for Suriya's Vaadivaasal,' reveals director

For the village action drama *Vaadivaasal*, which was announced several months ago, actor Suriya and director Vetrimaaran have paired up. The film has regained attention while still in pre-production. Vetrimaaran revealed in a recent interview that he only has 20 days left to finish filming *Viduthala: Part 2*, his next production that stars Vijay Sethupathi and Soori in pivotal parts. He added that he will start filming *Vaadivaasal* within the next three months. More updates are highly anticipated by fans!

The music for this film, which Kalajipuli S Thanu produced under the V Creations banner, will be composed by Prakash Kumar. In this movie, Andrea Jeremiah is probably going to be paired opposite Suriya.



Jr NTR wraps up War 2's first schedule

Actor Jr NTR has wrapped up the first schedule of his upcoming film *War 2* starring Hrithik Roshan.

A source revealed that the actor wrapped up the first schedule on May 12.

"Jr NTR wrapped the first schedule of *War 2* on May 12. He shot for some extensive action sequences over a schedule of 30 days in Mumbai before heading back to Hyderabad," said the source. Jr NTR was pictured casting his vote in Hyderabad on Monday. The *RRR* star was joined by his wife Lakshmi Pranathi and mother Shalini to cast their votes at the polling center at Obul Reddy School in Jubilee Hills.

Talking about *War 2*, the film is the sequel to the 2019 film *War* directed by Siddharth Anand. The film marks the return of Hrithik as Major Kabir. The second installment also stars Kiara Advani and is directed by Ayan Mukerji.



Kalki 2898 AD: Deepika dubs in her mother tongue, Kannada, for the first time

Kalki 2898 AD has been one of the much-anticipated films, which is all set to hit cinemas on June 27, 2024. Helmed by Nag Ashwin, the film has created immense buzz ever since its announcement, making fans eager to witness the utopian-themed world unravel on the big screens.

According to the latest updates, the film's leading lady, Deepika Padukone, has herself dubbed in Hindi and her mother tongue, Kannada, for the film. This latest update comes as a promising move from the actress, making it obvious to draw the Kannada-speaking fans to witness the film in cinemas. Meanwhile, the actress is expecting her first child with Ranveer Singh and has been busy with the shooting of her upcoming films.



Ranveer Singh, Prasanth Varma's mega collaboration soon to be made official

In a highly anticipated collaboration, Bollywood powerhouse Ranveer Singh and acclaimed director Prasanth Varma seem to be official soon. The news, initially hinted at a few weeks ago, is being confirmed by sources, sparking excitement among fans and cinephiles alike.

Renowned for his dynamic performances and bold film choices, Ranveer Singh's admiration for Prasanth Varma's work, particularly the Telugu hit *HanuMan*, starring Teja Sajja, served as the catalyst for this collaboration. While official details were initially shrouded in secrecy, recent reports shed light on the project's development.

According to a report, Ranveer Singh and Prasanth Varma have formally launched their ambitious project, signaling the beginning of an epic cinematic journey.

With a staggering budget of Rs 300 crore, the film promises to be a cinematic spectacle of grand proportions.

Described as a period drama with a pan-India appeal, the project has been shrouded in anticipation. After meticulous deliberation, the duo has reportedly settled on the title *Brahma Rakshasa*, signifying a blend of mythological intrigue and contemporary storytelling.

Set for a multi-lingual release, *Brahma Rakshasa* is poised to captivate audiences across the nation with its compelling narrative and visual splendour. While the official announcement from the actor and director is eagerly awaited, the unveiling of the film's title has already ignited fervent anticipation among fans, setting the stage for a cinematic event of epic proportions.

Dhanush donates ₹1 crore to Actor Sangam building construction



Renowned actor Dhanush K. Raja has once again demonstrated his philanthropic spirit by generously donating Rs 1 crore towards the

construction of the Actor Sangam building. The contribution comes as a significant boost to the ongoing efforts to establish a dedicated space for the

welfare and development of actors within the industry.

Dhanush, known for his versatile performances and compassionate nature, made the generous donation from his personal funds, reaffirming his commitment to supporting initiatives aimed at the betterment of the entertainment community.

The Actor Sangam, also known as the South Indian Artists' Association, plays a crucial role in advocating for the rights and welfare of actors across various film industries in South India. The construction of a dedicated building serves as a testament to the

organisation's mission to provide a conducive environment for actors to thrive professionally and personally.

Dhanush's contribution underscores the importance of solidarity and mutual support within the entertainment fraternity, setting a commendable example for fellow actors and industry stakeholders to follow.

As the construction of the Actor Sangam building progresses with the support of individuals like Dhanush, it symbolises not only a physical structure but also a beacon of hope and unity for actors across South India.

Trisha winds up shooting for Identity

Actress Trisha Krishnan has a strong filmography that includes both Tamil and Telugu releases. The much-awaited Malayalam film *Identity*, starring Tovino Thomas in the pivotal role, is another addition to her repertoire. Under the direction of

directors Akhil Paul and Anas Khan, the production is expected to enthrall viewers with its captivating plot. According to the most recent update, Trisha has successfully finished filming her portion of the project. All that needs to be done is the dubbing,

which will be finished later. Vinay Rai, Mandira Bedi, Shammu Thilakan, Aju Varghese, Arjun Radhakrishnan, and Archana Kavi are among the film's impressive cast members. The film is produced by Ragam Movies and Century Films.



T-TOWN COMES IN FULL SWING TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT!



Tollywood celebrities, much like citizens across the nation, exercised their democratic rights by casting their votes during elections. Beyond the glitz and glamour of the silver screen, these stars actively participate in shaping the political landscape of their state and country. When election season arrives, Tollywood's finest, from actors to directors and producers, step out of their reel personas to fulfill their civic duty. With their influence and popularity, they often serve as role models, encouraging their fans and followers to participate in the democratic process. Their presence at polling booths not only underscores the importance of voting but also sends a powerful message about civic responsibility. It's a reminder that, irrespective of their celebrity status, they are first and foremost citizens committed to contributing to the democratic fabric of society. From Chiranjeevi to Allu Arjun to Rajamouli, here are some pictures of celebrities casting their votes.

